{See Note at end.}

UNITY

CHURCH-DOOR PULPIT,

FOR

FREEDOM, FELLOWSHIP AND CHARACTER IN RELIGION.

Series II. Chicago, May 1, 1885. No. 3.

THE CITY OF THE SOUL

By REV. STOPFORD A. BROOKE, of LONDON, ENGLAND.

HEB. XI, 10: "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

What Abraham was, whether a real personage or a tribal name, round whom in either case a story grew, is not the question here. The question is what the writer of this Epistle thought as he pictured in his mind the career of a patriarch whom he at least thought historical. And it is plain that he saw Abraham as one who passed onward through life, giving up the visible and the transient for the sake of realities, invisible and eternal, of which he had no proof save within, but which he believed in, and through his belief, realized. He saw the ancient hero of his race, and his heart swelled with admiration.

But what did the writer of the Epistle really see? What did he reverence? He saw and reverenced a character. He saw the courage, faith, resolution, obedience to the voice within, which sent Abraham forth, sacrificing all, from his home, to follow God alone; the wandering life which mixed with many men, but never was seduced from righteousness, save once; the soul, careless of worldly rights and wealth, which tossed to Lot the choice of all he wished; the heart that year after year longed for the promise and the son that came not, and yet did not distrust God; the dweller in the mountains and on the plains that did not care to make a resting place for himself, for he lived in the joy of two great conceptions—first, that God was always with him, and secondly, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed; whose compassion and boldness were equally deep when he pleaded with the Almighty for the sinful city; and who died as he had lived, God and the mountain simplicity in his heart, having built up into finished form and charm that strong and stately character, equally natural and noble,—at one with God, God in his heart, God's voice in his ears, the splendid faiths and hopes of humanity as vital in death as in life, and always looking up from the city within him, which God and he had built, to the archetypal city beyond, which had foundations, which God had built and made for him as day by day God built and made the city of his soul.

"Looking for a city that had foundations"—yes, perhaps so, for even in that ancient time, when there was no fixed belief in a world to come, there were hours when it rose, like an island of the blest, in golden mist out of the sea of humanity, and men saw its vision and rejoiced. But

if that were not so, yet the city *was* built, and its foundations were secure. Within Abraham its walls arose and its temples—the city of the soul, the city of a divine character whose builder and maker was God.

So, too, this writer to the Hebrews conceived, there was a city within, but he conceived yet more. For when he lived, men looked forward to the swift advent of Jesus and to a material city, a new Jerusalem, where all the just should live and reign. He, too, like Abraham, was a Pilgrim of the invisible; he, too, lived in faith, looking forward, and in the looking towards that appearing, purified himself even as his King was pure, and hour by hour, stone by stone, prayed that his mind and life might be wrought into the city of God—a house not made with hands, a character, whose builder and maker was God—so that, in the end, he might be fit to be a citizen of the glorious Jerusalem.

Many things have changed for us since then. We do not look for a new Jerusalem such as this writer saw. We do not wander like Abraham from encampment to encampment, having no settled home, save that which faith creates. But still we have the same ideas as they possessed—modified in a hundred ways—but in their source and power unchanged; still we use the same terms; still we can speak of being strangers and pilgrims upon earth; still we say we walk by faith; still we sing of the all-golden Jerusalem; still we cry, "we look for a city which hath foundations." All the world has changed but the human soul, and the continuity of terms expresses the unaltered and continuous ideas by which the religion of man lives. This is eternity in history. Empires pass away; the everlasting mountains bow, all things pass and change, but not the Soul—not the essential Life of Man. If you would know the infinite—there it is; and it is God in Man. As it was with Abraham, so was it with the writer of this Epistle; as it was with him, so is it with us. How few of you do not feel your hearts thrill as you say—"We look for a city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God." As it is with us, so will it be a thousand years hence; and some man, finding on a stall some poem of this time which shall record these words, will wander homewards thinking—"So they thought a thousand years ago, so think I now; all is changed but this alone, the city of the soul."

This, then, we possess within, you and I; a city which day by day is built. Who is the builder, and on what foundations does it rest? The senses are its gates! How are they guarded, are they fast shut against our evil enemies? The conscience is its market place, where all its food is weighed and sold! Of what kind are the scales used there, false or true; and in its stalls is there wakefulness and obedience? The reason is its House of Representatives! Who sits in the Speaker's chair, who carries the day when the parties of right and wrong divide? The imagination sets up its palaces and gardens. With what pictures are they filled, who are the folk that walk therein, what are the dreams and fancies that lie in its woods or wander by its streams? The faculties, desires, powers, aspirations, all the pleasures and pains of thought, the feelings, the incessant thinkings—these are its houses! Of what kind are they? Built to last forever, secure against decay, white and pure, with all their windows open to the airs of heaven? Who has built and made it all, wonderful city that it is? Year by year, day by day, it has been wrought, and now it stands within—the image of your very self. Go, walk through its streets, and think on who has built it—God, or your own wild will? And, is it He, who having built it, dwells in its citadel, or that other—your own Liking—who has laid every stone of it?

It is easy to answer the question by asking another. "On what foundation does the city rest?" If it rest on the rock of doing righteousness, of hearing and doing the things which Jesus told us were the things of God; on strict obedience to the laws of Love, and Truth, and Purity—then God has built the city of your soul; and it will resist the earthquakes and the floods of life, and all the storms of evil will not overthrow its walls. But if its foundations are only your own feelings undirected by righteous will and not the doing of noble things, only fan-

cies to be good or fancies to be wrong; only your own daily desires, only shifting, changing will—then the whole city rests upon the sand, and walls and gates, palaces and houses, are in mortal peril. Let the rain come; and the flood and the tempest of life, and in a moment it will fall, and great will be its ruin,

Weary, unspeakably weary, will be the re-building! Yet, it must be done. From year to year, through many a time and times in the eternal world you will have to clear away the ruin, to set free the ground, to lay again the foundation, so that God with you may build into nobleness that inward city. It is a work which will be spared to none. Now or hereafter you will have to build a perfect city! Do it now. Call now your Father to your side. Lift into lovely and noble proportions the buildings of the soul. Lay to your work the plummet of righteousness. Say to your will—"Bend yourself under the order and command of God. Obey and know your rightful Lord; *you* are not the architect, but you should be His master builder." While you are here, let the city be finished for eternity.

And for this purpose let your foundation be in the living rock. That is the first thing, "He that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him to a man who built his house upon a rock." The city of the soul, when God is maker and builder, is founded upon loving, true and righteous action. What sort of action is that? you ask—as if you did not know! Every one knows, but all do not choose to know. And if you are in any doubt, there are noble lives enough recognized by all the world, from seeing which you may clearly understand what righteous doing means; above all, there is Jesus Christ our Master. He laid that foundation deep, and other foundation than that no man may lay. It is laid in the character of God Himself—laid on the rocky, unshakable basis of Eternal Righteousness and Love. Not a child in this congregation but can understand what it means, to have that foundation for the city of the soul—"What you feel to be right and loving, do in the name of God your Father." There it is! and when the city of the soul rises on that living rock, then its gates and walls, markets and palaces, houses and gardens, and its capitol, are fit and beautiful, and become themselves eternal as the rock on which they rose. It is a city which hath foundations.

Look, then, within upon your inner life. There lies the shining city on the plain of your heart, with all its wonders, full to the edge of its walls with the houses which the events of every-day life have built, crowded with its population of thoughts and feelings. You know it! You alone, and God, behold it. Has it foundations? Will it stand when the day of test arrives? What is it that you have within? Is God its builder and maker? Day by day has He been with you? Hour by hour has His Presence filled your soul? As each day added a new house to the city, as each day's thoughts and emotions were born to become the dwellers in that house, were the doings of the day, and the thoughts, done and thought in God—so that you rejoiced that the eyes of perfect Love and Holiness beheld them? Was every house, which every day built, built with the Truth, and Justice, and Temperance, and Wisdom, with the Beauty and Power of the Lord present, so that no lying, or injustice, no intemperance or folly, no dishonor, and no weakness were built into it, to make it unsafe or ugly; so that when you pass by that place, in the walks that memory takes through the soul's city, you need not shiver with distress, or dread that the building will tumble in hideous ruin, but be able to look up and think,—God built up that day with me; its house is mine and His for ever.

And now, if you can look inwardly with some peace; not with complete joy indeed—for who has not built many a day weakly, or ill? in whose heart are not many gardens desolate, and many houses in ruins?—but if, on the whole, the city of the soul has its foundation on the rock; if its buildings and dwellings are fair and firm; if you may say with humility, God has built it along with me—then, be proud of it, with that pride which guards it against evil and dishonor; labor night and day to keep it strong and righteous; let nothing enter its gates which defileth or maketh a lie; regulate it; ennoble it; and in its centre,

in its citadel, pray that God your Father may dwell for ever, and daily walk its streets, and with His presence fill its dwellings; so that every thing in it which is noble and beautiful may be liberated to do the most fitting and loveliest work, and all that is base may be silenced and driven out; and all that is wild and untamed be humanized and ordered; until there is nothing in it which is not fit for the perfect world.

There, then, is one of the aims of life—the inward aim—indeed, perhaps the only aim; for if that be done, the outward aim, which is the helping of others to build the whole Temple of Humanity, will surely be done well, when this is well done. Strive for that end. The man who cares for Christ, who would follow him to God, the man who has just reason will gather all his powers together, and stretch himself like a bent bow to this aim of life. He will look to the city which is within him, and order all things for its perfect building; not for his own sake, but for the love of God, and for the use of Man. With those motives, self-development is nobleness, and the ennobling of the polity within is freed from danger.

So he will set to work. And now listen for a moment to what an old Greek, long before the time of Christ, said of this city of the soul. "First, he will honour all studies, and study all action which will chastise and deliver the city of his soul into perfection, and despise all other studies, and leave by all other action.

"And in the next place, he will keep under his body, and so far will he be from yielding to brutal or irrational pleasure, that he will not even look to bodily health as his main object, nor desire to be strong or well, unless he is likely thereby to gain temperance and inward strength of righteousness, but yet—that being given—will also desire to preserve the harmony of the body for the sake of the concord of the soul. This practical thing he will do, if he is indeed taught of God. And as to the things of this world—he will be also temperate and quiet. He will not increase his wealth beyond what he needs, nor seek for the praise of men, nor load himself with multitudinous business, nor bring upon him a burden of many cares which will prevent him looking upwards; but, considering the city within, and the need that God should always be seen and felt in it as first, will set aside all these excessive worldly aims, and regulate all life, so that no change for the worse take place in the constitution and institutions of the city of the soul.

"And if honors are offered him, he will accept such as will make him a better man, more worthy of the presence of God in his soul; but will put aside all preferment or wealth of any kind, whether private or public, which is likely to loosen or injure his possessed habits of righteousness, and quietude, of temperance, justice, and truth; in all things being a politician—not, perhaps, in his native country, but in that inward city" of which God is the founder, and which he builds with God.

Thus far said the Greek, and, indeed, we might think we heard a Christian teacher speaking.

So, guarding it from without, the Christian will govern the city of the soul within, with the help of God. Secret and evil thoughts roam in it, like felons in the night. Base desires, unbridled wills, savage passions, vile counsels, creep into its dwellings. He who cares for the city of the soul makes prayer his companion, and day by day drives all these things out, purifying his heart, till in its most secret gardens and in its lowliest dwellings the soul is clean, and free, and noble; till he can, standing in its market-place, cry out with gratitude and joy,—The builder and maker of this city is God my Father.

Then it will be time for him to look forward, and not till then. Then he may think within himself and say,—In heaven there is laid up for me a pattern of this city within me, perfect as this is not; beautiful exceedingly, — the ideal which God had of me when he sent me into the world, the archetype of myself. Now, having wrought and governed myself into harmony with God, having built with Him into some loveliness my inward city, I can behold that other, and rejoice. Now I may look forward to the time when, life here over, the city I have within will unite itself into the archetypal city in the ideal world, and be joined to it for ever. And in that hope I am glad with joy unspeak-

able and full of glory. And when things are sorrowful and weary here, and labor and pain make me impatient, and the daily building is beset with trouble, and the gates are besieged with sins, and I beat them back with pain ; and when my own desires turn traitors, and it is difficult to drive them beyond the wall, — in the midst of the storm, or in the midst of evil dreams, I may look up and behold that other city of my soul which God keeps for me, which has its foundations in His Eternal Love, and which He built and made for me from all Eternity ; and beholding, I shall be strong and very courageous.

But whether there be such a city or not for me, as I surely trust there is—even if there were none, there is at least this city of the soul within. I know what ought to be its foundations. I know how it should be built, kept, and governed, and I will act according to that knowledge, and live to make the city subject to the true law. Were God to give me no dwelling place hereafter, at least He shall be able here to dwell with me, in the city that hath His own foundations.

Our "Church-Door Pulpit" hints its purpose in its name. It aims to furnish fortnightly a transfigured tract,—transfigured by being paid for, and by representing not so much a given system of beliefs as the emphasis, in somewhat varying beliefs, on "Freedom, Fellowship and Character in Religion;" this tract to be taken from the rack or table at the church-door to the home, there to serve its little mission by reading in the family, lending to a neighbor, mailing to a distant friend, etc. We hope the plan may be destined to wide adoption by Liberal churches as part of their regular church-work.

The word "UNITY" in the title bears to the Committee who arrange the series a wide meaning, pointing more to the substance, than to the forms, of religious thought and faith; and in inviting contributions they have sought, not only through the whole range, but in both directions beyond the range, of those who bear the "Unitarian" name,—though most of the writers must naturally be found within that name. "New Orthodoxy," "New Judaism," those who care for no name but "Religion," and the "Ethical Societies," will all be represented. The choice of subject is left to the writers; and *each writer is responsible for his own utterance alone, and for nothing else in the series.* "One of your best—a life-helping sermon, or a thought-sermon reaching the life," was the invitation sent out.

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The New Heaven.

Let whosoever will, inquire
  Of spirit or of seer,
To shape into the heart's desire
  The new life's vision clear.

My God, I rather look to Thee
  Than to these fancies fond,
And wait, till Thou reveal to me
  That fair and far beyond.

I seek not of Thy Eden-land
  The forms and hues to know,
What trees in mystic order stand,
  What strange, sweet waters flow ;

What duties fill the heavenly day,
  Of commerce glad and kind,
Or how along each shining way
  The bright processions wind.

Oh, joy ! to hear with sense new born
  The angels' greeting strains,
And sweet to see the first fair morn
  Gild the celestial plains.

But sweeter far to trust in Thee
  While all is yet unknown,
And through the death-dark cheerily
  To walk with Thee alone.

In Thee, my powers, my treasures live,
  To Thee, my life must tend ;
Giving Thyself, Thou all dost give,
  O soul-sufficing friend !

And wherefore should I seek above
  Thy City in the sky?
Since firm in faith, and deep in love,
  Its broad foundations lie?

Since in a life of peace and prayer,
  Nor known on earth, nor praised,
By humblest toil, by ceaseless care,
  Its holy towers are raised.

Where faith the soul hath purified,
  And penitence hath shriven,
And truth is crowned and glorified,
  There—only there—is Heaven.

Eliza Scudder.

The City of Light.

Have you heard the Golden City
  Mentioned in the legends old?
Everlasting light shines o'er it,
  Wondrous tales of it are told.

Only righteous men and women
  Dwell within its gleaming wall,
Wrong is banished from its borders,
  Justice reigns supreme o'er all.

You may roam o'er hill and valley,
  You may pass o'er land and sea,
You may search the wide earth over—
  'Tis a City yet to be !

We are builders of that City :
  All our joys and all our groans
Help to rear its shining ramparts,
  All our lives are building-stones.

What its plan may be we know not ;
  How the seat of Justice high,
How the City of our vision
  Will appear to mortal eye,—

That no mortal eye can picture,
  That no mortal tongue can tell ;
We can barely dream the glories
  Of the Future's citadel.

But for it we still must labor,
  For its sake bear pain and grief,
In it find the end of living
  And the anchor of belief.

And the work that we have builded,
  Oft with bleeding hands and tears,
And in error and in anguish,
  Will not perish with our years.

It will be at last made perfect
  In the universal plan,
It will help to crown the labors
  Of the toiling hosts of man.

It will last and shine transfigured
  In the final reign of Right,
It will merge into the splendors
  Of the City of the Light.

Felix Adler.

THE "CHURCH-DOOR PULPIT"

NEW FURNISHED FOR NEXT YEAR.

The second year of the "CHURCH DOOR PULPIT" begins in April, and the preachers that are to preach the fortnightly sermon in it are gathering. The series of twenty sermons will differ from last year's in two respects. Four numbers will be devoted respectively to

Channing, Parker, Emerson, Martineau,

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In three more numbers the subjects

"God," "Miracles," "The Bible,"

will be respectively treated in extracts from several writers. Each of these three pamphlets will be, as it were, a handful of short liberal tracts on its special subject.

The other thirteen numbers will probably be single sermons from as many preachers,—preachers ranging in their thought from Liberal Orthodoxy to the Society for Ethical Culture; most of them finding a home, therefore, under the Unitarian name. To announce the broad religious fellowship, the "unity without uniformity" of faith, implied in such pulpit comradeship,—to announce and emphasize and further that, is one purpose for which the CHURCH-DOOR PULPIT as well as UNITY was started; it is one purpose which itself started "Unitarianism." The independence of each writer is guarded by the note printed on his sermon, that he is responsible for his own alone, and for nothing else in the series. The list, alphabetically arranged, stands:

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Stopford A. Brooke,
Phillips Brooks,
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Rowland Connor,
Washington Gladden,
T. W. Higginson,
S. H. Sonneschein.
John C. Learned,
Andrew P. Peabody,
Minot J. Savage,
John Snyder,

The hope is that our churches, West and East, will catch the new church-habit, to *regularly and freely furnish forth a table or shelf near the door with such pamphlets*, first for home reading and then for lending and mailing, *each reader becoming his own missionary society for whatever he finds worthy.* It is found that a minute's "prelude" from the minister, describing the "Church-Door" sermon for the day and its preacher, interests the people in it and him, and usually causes the table to be swept of its thirty, forty or fifty copies. But much of the people's interest depends upon this prelude-habit. To make his dumb colleague do good work the minister must treat him heartily.

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In this way nearly 30,000 "Church-Door Pulpit" sermons have been distributed more or less widely this past year, mainly in the west. Probably nothing like so many tracts could have been circulated here in any other way. And probably no better way can be devised of making each church, East and West, a little "Propaganda" society of our Faith and Principles. Everybody knows *one* person who would like to read what *he* likes. Anybody will hand or mail one tract. And this local and post-office Propaganda is much more likely to enlist members and interest the church at large, if the work is allowed to cost them a trifle, than if it costs them nothing. A tract *paid for* is almost redeemed! Paid for by one of its receivers and on-speeders instead of by some Society, it is "twice blessed,—it blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

Each Church that subscribes $25 for a block of fifty copies and uses them thoroughly through individual readers, as here suggested, besides any good done in its own homes, sends out twenty times fifty, or one thousand tracts a year, to spread the Liberal Faith—a little mission well worth adding regularly to any church-life.

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